



## *Work Related Valley Fever*

### **Employers are legally responsible to protect workers from Valley Fever**

Valley Fever is a disease caused by a fungus (*Coccidioides immitis*) that grows naturally in the soil and dirt in areas of California, mostly in the Central Valley. The Valley Fever fungus is found in the top 12 inches of soil, and is released into the air when the soil is disturbed. Exposure to this fungus is caused by soil disturbances associated with construction activities such as excavation, hand digging, dust storms, and driving on dirt roads.

Anyone exposed to valley fever is susceptible, especially at-risk populations such as adults over 60, African Americans and Filipinos, diabetics, and immune-compromised individuals. The [CDC](#) reports that there were 15,611 cases of Valley Fever in 2018.

California OSHA recently cited a construction company for two workers contracting Valley Fever, the article detailing the enforcement actions can be found [here](#). The state of California passed Assembly Bill 203, Chapter 712. The Bill mandates training, and the topics that must be included in the training. The deadline for this training is May 1, 2020. A link to the Bill's text can be located [here](#).

The State of California Department of Industrial Relations published a webpage that provides detailed information about what Valley Fever is, applicable regulations, work activities that increase exposure risk, prevention, and what to do if a worker reports symptoms. The prevention methods that the Department of Industrial Relations recommends include soil disturbance minimization, NIOSH-approved respiratory protection, and cleaning of tools and equipment before transporting them. This page can be accessed [here](#).

Additional information published by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) can be accessed at the link below.

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/ValleyFeverBrochure.pdf>

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